

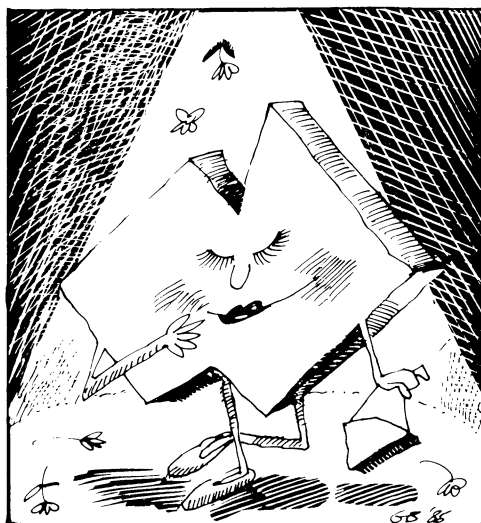
AUSTRALIA, TAKE A BOW!

A look at honours and awards

Not only Mel Gibson and Paul Hogan who've put Australia on the map for citizens of the United States. Now they've discovered our children's books as well.

The American Notable Children's Book Committee (a division of the American Library Association) have included some Australian books in their latest listing of 'notable children's books'. Listed were Joan Phipson *Hit and Run*, Patricia Wrightson for *Night on the Side* and Jan Ormerod for *Dad's Back, My Baby, Reading and Sleeping*.

Already 1986 has been an outstanding year of recognition for talent of Australian children's writers and illustrators. Patricia Wrightson and Robert Ingpen took double honours in the top international award – the IBBY Hans Christian Andersen Awards, by winning the writer and illustrator sections of this most



prestigious award. And Patricia Wrightson has achieved a hat trick of honours winning the Swedish 'Cat of the Year Award', (so-called because it is a statuette of a cat) presented for distinguished writing.

IBBY Honour Diplomas have gone to Nadia Wheatley for *Dancing in the Anzac Deli*, and Julie Vivas for illustrating *Possum Magic*.

Australia itself now has a considerable list of awards for children's books, including the West Australian Young Readers' Book Award (WAYRBA) in which the children themselves decide the winners; selection is not limited to Australian books. Victoria has also taken up this idea, although it covers Australian books only; the first Victorian YABBA award is to be made in October 1986. New South Wales too now has the NSW Kids Own Australian Literature Award with the children making the selection of their favourites from Australian books.

Incidentally, full coverage of all Australian children's book awards will be included in the soon-to-be-published LAA/IBBY book, *The New Classics*. Keep watching *InCite* for further details.

KNICKER TOPS

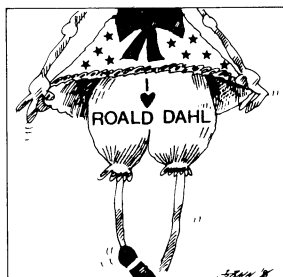
During the UK recently gave me the opportunity to visit Roald Dahl, and present him with the 1985 WA Young Readers Book Award trophy.

It was bitterly cold, and snow was falling. The village of Great Missenden was looking very picturesque, with Christmas tree lights streaming through the windows of many of the houses. After our drive from Oxford, the blazing fire and drinks were most welcome.

Roald Dahl had not been well, and was recovering from an operation, which had taken a heavy toll but had not dampened his spirits. We were welcomed like old friends, and regaled with stories, and when he came to unwrap the trophy his family clapped loudly and called on him to make a speech. He said the trophy was far the nicest that he had received (and he had won them from all over the world), and he was most impressed by the Australian children's enthusiasm for reading. He enjoyed hearing about the Helena School's dramatisation of *The BFG*, and was pleased that a reference to Frobbscottle and Whizpopper chapter had been included. This set him off on an anecdote about how nobility can break wind without so much as pausing in their conversation, and how much children like words such as 'knicker-tops'.

He said he never read children's books, and that an awful lot of rubbish was written for them. There were three copies of *The Gremlock* out on the table. When I started to read

one he said they were not worth reading, and only of historic interest. In the front of one there was a poem he had written forty years ago, and had just rediscovered, called 'The Real Story'. It was very moving, and said something along the lines that when we lose we laugh and laughing makes us win. There was also the finished manuscript for his new book on the table. It is to be a sequel to *Boy*, and he was thinking of calling it *Solo*.



We had brought with us a stack of books, owned by my friends and their children. He happily autographed them all, and said since I had come all the way from Australia, I must choose one of his books for myself. He made it sound as if I had made the trip expressly to see him, and what better to choose than *The BFG*.

We dragged ourselves away as his party went off to play pool, in a newly constructed room in the garden, which contained a full sized billiards table and lots of books. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and memorable evening.

Charity Haynes
Teacher Librarian
Loreto Primary

See the next issue of *InCite* for reviews of recent children's books by the kids themselves.

What's happening in Children's Book Week

The Children's Book Council have issued the programme for this year's Children's Book Week. The Book Fair will once more be held at the Lower Sydney Town Hall from 24-27 July and will be open from 9-4 pm on Thursday and Friday, 10-5 pm on Saturday and Sunday.

Special features of the fair include a visit by all the pupils from Baan Baa School – 20 in all! Baan Baa is 520 km from Sydney and for the past three years children from this remote area have sent in their contributions of books they have written and pictures they have painted.

The official opening of Book Week will be at a luncheon on Monday 21 July at Bunnratty Castle in the Argyle Tavern. This will be the occasion for the presentation of the Lady Cutler Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in NSW, and this event will also mean an opportunity of meeting many writers and illustrators for children.

This year's award winners will be announced in Canberra on Friday 18 July.

For more information contact Lynn Bogarde on (02) 357 3716.